

## Two Abortive Attempts to Destroy the New Ironsides.

### THE HULL OF THE VESSEL UN-INJURED.

### SHE IS PROVED TORPEDO PROOF.

### A Large Reward Offered for Her Destruction.

#### FATE OF THE REBEL RAM.

[From the N. Y. Tribune of the 15th.]

At 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> o'clock of the night of the 5th inst, the Quartermaster on watch aboard the New Ironsides reported to the officer of the deck a suspicious craft, with smoke stack, and setting very low in the water, making directly toward the vessel. The night, although clear, and the sky studded with stars, was nevertheless unusually dark, and but little could be distinguished of the stranger except the smoke-pipe and her low hull, the latter extremely indistinct; she appeared to be steaming at a speed of seven knots an hour. How she could have passed our picket boats was a question to be considered, for it was just possible she might belong to us, and to fire upon her without first determining her character and intention might result in more serious damage than if she were an enemy; so she was allowed to come within hailing distance. More and more distinct she grew as she approached—a cigar-shaped hull, after the pattern of the Winant gunboat, driving before it through the water a smaller object, which could hardly be distinguished; a black smoke-pipe, from which issued a thin cloud of black smoke, but no other indications of the motive power within, were visible. Still she glided on, the object of her approach either the frigate itself or the Devils which lay moored on the port side. Coming near enough to hear, she was hailed and ordered to stop, but she neither made reply or obeyed the summons. All hands were piped to quarters; a gun was fired, but the curious craft sat too low in the water, and the ball passed over her. A second shot followed the first, with the same result; then a volley of musketry, lighting up for a moment, with its flash, the steamer, the torpedo at her bow, and the figure of a man, sitting astride of the cigar-shaped hull, engaged in steering. This man, whose name is Toombs, and who is now in irons on board the flag-ship, fired a shot in retaliation, which severely wounded Ensign Howard, the officer of the deck. He pretends to have been sailing-master of the expedition, which he undoubtedly was, and is a man of moderate height, strong, muscular frame, a dark wrinkled skin, dark eyes, and coarse black hair and beard. There were three others with him, all under command of Lieut. Glassell, formerly of the United States Navy. He is said to be a man of superior talents and bravery, was captured some time since and confined in Fort Warren, but subsequently on being released, rejoined the Southern army; he is now a prisoner on the Ottawa. The musketry firing from the frigate after the first volley became rapid and continuous, but seemed in no way to interfere with the execution of the plan had in view by those aboard the steamer, as she approached nearer and nearer each moment to the "Ironsides," her bow pointing towards the latter's side, and run close in under her guns. At this moment a terrific explosion took place, jarring the great iron-plated hull of the frigate, and sending into the air a huge column of water that fell in torrents all around, and entering the smoke pipe of the little steamer immediately extinguished her fires. When this had subsided, and the sea was again calm, nothing whatever was to be seen of her; the supposition is that she went down. But struggling for life were two men, evidently members of her crew, who were picked up by a boat lowered for the purpose from the "Ironsides." They are the two I have already mentioned, the seaman Toombs, and Lieut. Glassell; but neither of them can tell what happened in the time between the explosion of the torpedo and the moment they found themselves battling with the waves, or say confidently whether the steamer sunk, or, rekindling her fires, moved off in the direction of Charleston.

#### DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY THE FRIGATE.

Very little injury was done the Ironsides; in truth, I may say, with the exception of a few dents, no harm whatever was sustained by her. She is a noble ship, and worth all the Monitors together. The prisoners state that the people of Charleston have very little faith in the capacity of the latter to reduce the fortifications leading to the harbor, but hold in great fear the terrible batteries of the New Ironsides. To prove the endurance of the ship, I would add that the shock she received was so severe that a huge

chest was thrown from its place in the lower hold against one of the stanchions, completely crushing the leg of a seaman who was unfortunate enough to be standing there. Twenty tons of water entered her decks.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE EXPEDITION.

This daring attempt, unprecedented in its boldness by anything which has happened during the war, had its origin in the city of Charleston, where the cost was raised by public subscription; some of the wealthiest citizens subscribing largely. The steamer was built there expressly for the purpose, the pattern of the Winant gunboat being adopted as the one best suited for the accomplishment of the object they had in view; the material being of wood. The torpedo, which was of the largest size, and similar in shape somewhat to the steamer, was exploded by means of a percussion cap at the further end, white lead being used to render it water proof. Large rewards were to be paid the men in case they succeeded in their desperate enterprise and came off safe, they being sanguine of blowing up the frigate but never expected to escape with their lives. Both steamer and torpedo were towed as far as Fort Sumter by another vessel; it was probably owing to this that they escaped the notice of our picket boats, these latter being engaged watching the movements of the convoy, which steamed here and there on the water as if bound on a mission of mischief of her own, before gliding back to Charleston.

#### ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

The correspondent of the Baltimore American writes from Charleston harbor as follows:

CHARLESTON HARBOR, Oct. 10.

On Monday night last a daring but unsuccessful attempt was made by the rebels to destroy the frigate New Ironsides, lying near Fort Moultrie, by a torpedo. They employed for this purpose a small and very swift steamer, seagull shaped, and showing but a very small portion above the water. The vessel was manned by a crew of four men, consisting of Lieutenant Gasset who was commander of the party, an engineer named Toombs, a fireman named Scott, and a pilot whose name is unknown at the present writing.

This steamer eluded the picket boats of our fleet by passing close in to the shore of Sullivan's Island. She then made directly across the harbor, and came up to the Ironsides without attracting any attention. She struck the vessel fairly amidships, exploding a torpedo containing sixty pounds of rifle powder at the moment of contact. The rebel steamer was undoubtedly sunk, either by the force of the collision or by our shot.

Lieut. Gasset jumped overboard and swam to a schooner. He and the fireman, Scott, are now prisoners on board the guardship.

Lieutenant Gasset was formerly in our navy. He says that the explosion of the torpedo drove the steamer under, so that the water ran into her smoke stack and put out her fires. The torpedo was suspended to the bow of the rebel vessel, so as to strike the Ironsides under the water. The explosion was severely felt on the Ironsides; but no material damage was done to her hull, engine or armament. One man had his leg broken, and one of the bulkheads of the vessel was knocked down—an injury which can be repaired here.

The Ironsides was immediately prepared for action by Captain Rowan, and is now as effective for offensive operations as ever. She is now regarded here as torpedo proof. She opened fire with musketry on the rebel vessel, and in a few minutes fired two of her larger guns. A musket shot, fired from the rebel vessel, dangerously wounded Ensign Charles Howard of the Ironsides, who was officer of the deck at the time. The bottom of the Ironsides has been examined by divers and found to be wholly uninjured.

The rebel engineer Toombs, formerly of our navy, and the pilot of the rebel steamer, are supposed to have been drowned.

On Tuesday night it was supposed that the rebels meditated a second attack on the Ironsides. A boat of the same kind, believed to have been a small steamer, approached our picket line, but was discovered, and driven off after some firing.

The rebels greatly dread the Ironsides, and it is said that the people of Charleston have offered a reward of sixty thousand dollars in gold for her destruction.

General Gillmore and Admiral Dahlgreen have both paid a brief visit to Port Royal. While there, General Gillmore visited the flagship with a band, and serenaded the Admiral. The incident shows how little truth there is in the story of ill feeling between these two distinguished

officers. They are, and always have been in hourly intercourse by signals.

There has been the usual firing during the past week, principally by the rebel batteries. General Gillmore occasionally replies to the James Island batteries, or throws a shell into Fort Sumter.

The signs are encouraging for the renewal of active operations.

#### From the Army of the Potomac.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, Oct. 14, 1863.

About dusk last night our cavalry encountered the enemy near Catlett's Station and toward Warrenton. A brisk artillery fire was opened and continued up to late in the evening. At daybreak this morning the firing was resumed, lasting through the forenoon.

About 3 o'clock this afternoon very heavy cannonading opened along an extended line, in the direction of Manassas, which lasted up to 7 o'clock this evening. The sound receded toward night, and it seemed evident that our forces had driven the enemy back a considerable distance. It is thought by some that Lee has his entire army in front of Meade's forces. It is believed that no considerable body of infantry has as yet been engaged.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24, 1863.

The Evening Star says: The whole of Gen. Gregg's division was ordered from Bolton Station on Saturday toward Culpepper, and arrived there at 4 o'clock p. m. Thence the 2d Brigade of the 2d Division was ordered to Fox Mountain, to support Kilpatrick, but finding that Kilpatrick did not need reinforcements, the brigade left him Sunday morning and rejoined the division at Culpepper. On Sunday night, Gen. Gregg moved to Sulphur Springs, arriving at about 9 p. m. On Monday morning, two regiments, the 4th and 13th Pennsylvania, were sent forward to Jefferson, about 5 miles from Sulphur Springs, and the 1st Maine were sent out toward Little Washington to reconnoiter. The last named regiment encountered a larger force of the enemy just beyond Amosville, and were surrounded, but gallantly cut their way out, and crossed the river at Waterloo Ford, about 12 miles above Sulphur Springs.

About 10 o'clock on Monday morning the enemy advanced on the 4th and 13th Pennsylvania, which were at Jefferson, with cavalry, showing heavy infantry supports in their rear; when our cavalry, seeing they were being overpowered, fell back slowly, contesting the ground, to a large forest this side of Jefferson, where Gen. Gregg, who led these regiments in person, dismounted a portion of his men, and sent them out as skirmishers, their horses having been sent back to Sulphur Springs. After stubbornly contesting the ground for over two hours, they were ordered to fall back slowly, and as they were doing so a heavy infantry force of the enemy was discovered on each flank, and at the same time three regiments of cavalry, having made a wide detour, attacked them in the rear. At this time the 10th New York was sent to the support of Gen. Gregg, and Reed's Battery M, 2d United States Artillery, opened on the rebel cavalry, but owing to the short range of the guns, which were brass Napoleons, no serious damage was inflicted on the enemy by them.

The 4th and 13th were now pressed severely in front, and our center broken, and at the same time they were attacked on each flank and in the rear. Our men cut their way through, and escaped across the river with heavy loss.

The 16th Pennsylvania was now dismounted and thrown out along the river banks as skirmishers, while the 8th was also dismounted and ordered to support the battery, which had only four short range guns, and the enemy opened on us with some twenty pieces of artillery, but our troops gallantly held their ground for several hours, repulsing the charges of the enemy, and gradually fell back on the Fayetteville road, the enemy following, but keeping at a respectful distance.

Col. Gregg had but two aids with him, Lieutenants Martin and Cutler, and both were wounded, the former severely, and the latter slightly. Lieut. Adams of the 4th Pennsylvania, Major Wilson of the 8th Pennsylvania, Lieut.-Col. Kettler of the 1st New Jersey, and Major Russell of the 1st Maryland were wounded. The loss of the 2d brigade, it is thought, will amount to about 450 in killed, wounded and missing—the 4th and 13th Pennsylvania regiments suffering the most severely.

Col. Gregg is highly spoken of for the manner in which he fought his men, and it was owing to his skill and bravery that the 4th and 13th fought their way out of a precarious situation. He was at the head of his men in the thickest of the fight, and in several charges took the lead. During the engagement the rebels charged the battery, and captured one of the guns, but the 1st New Jersey cavalry gallantly charged back and recaptured the piece,

which was immediately turned on them with good effect.

Our cavalry yesterday held the enemy in check, and there was some little skirmishing, one man being wounded while on picket last evening.

We have the following additional from the front:

Meade is not only secure in his position, but has resumed the offensive, to the extent of making a cavalry reconnoissance to the south of the Rappahannock yesterday.

It is believed that the rebels lost more in the fighting on Sunday than ourselves, as on one occasion two of our light batteries firing into a mass of the enemy mowed them down like grass.

All the indications go to show that Lee hoped by a rapid and secret flank movement to Meade's right to strike Brandy Station, between Culpepper and the Rappahannock, cutting off our line of communication, and forcing Meade to give battle under disadvantageous circumstances, with a river in his rear and Lee between himself and his supplies.

The skillful maneuver by which Meade checkmated his astute adversary, and without loss of any sort (to any appreciable extent) placed himself on the "other side of Jordan," and in a position where he preferred to accept battle, seems to have considerably bothered the rebels, who do not seem inclined to fight unless with the same like advantages of a surprise and an ambushade.

The change of position made by our army was effected without the slightest confusion; and as stated by us yesterday, the amount of stores destroyed or left behind, beyond Culpepper, would not make a car load, all told.

On Sunday night our forces crossed the Rappahannock, and on Monday morning two corps recrossed and drove the enemy to Brandy Station, with a severe loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners on the rebel side. They then received an order to fall back, which they did in good order, Gen. Buford, with his cavalry, on the left, Kilpatrick in the center, and Gregg on the right. Gregg and Buford succeeded in holding the enemy in check on the right and left until 9 o'clock, when acting under orders, they fell back upon our main body; the purpose of the movement having been effected.

The loss in Gregg's division of cavalry is said to be severe, the 4th and 13th Pennsylvania and 10th New York suffering most. Of the 13th Pennsylvania, 400 went into the fight, and 200 are reported disabled.

Majo Robison of the 10th New York is reported killed, and Capt. Rhodes and Lieuts. Prentiss and Vose of the 1st Rhode Island cavalry, seriously wounded.

Meade succeeded in saving all his transportation, not even losing a wagon.

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